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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 INT-05 OES-07 DOE-11 SOE-02
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8628
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PORG, PFOR, BG, UK, IN, NP
SUBJECT: CALLAGHAN COMMENTS ON EASTERN WATERS

REF: DACCA 0102

1. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AND IN A SEPARATE TV INTERVIEW JANUARY 9, PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN REPEATED THE OFFER OF BRITISH ASSISTANCE FOR A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EASTERN WATERS OF THE SUBCONTINENT (REFTEL). PRESS ACCOUNTS OF HIS REMARKS VARY, BUT BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION OFFICER DAVID MANNING TOLD EMBOFF THAT CALLAGHAN SAID THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED TO BOTH PRESIDENT ZIA AND MORARJI DESAI THE UK'S WILLINGNESS TO HELP IN ANY WAY, AND ITS VIEW THAT NEPAL SHOULD BE INCLUDED. ACCORDING TO MANNING, CALLAGHAN ALSO SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WERE SOME RESERVATIONS (MEANING IN INDIA) ON A
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REGIONAL PROJECT BUT THAT THIS WOULD BE SOMETHING FOR THE PARTIES INVOLVED TO RESOLVE. ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF CHINA, CALLAGHAN SAID IF AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED WITH CHINA, IT COULD PARTICIPATE AS WELL. PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE TV INTERVIEW QUOTE CALLAGHAN AS SAYING THAT HE HAD SEEN THE WASTAGE OF WATERS IN BANGLADESH AND THAT HE BELIEVED THERE WAS TREMENDOUS SCOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT IF THE

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THREE COUNTRIES COULD COOPERATE. HE ALSO SPOKE IN TERMS OF A 20-YEAR SCHEME BEING NECESSARY AND OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHERS.

2. THE LEFTIST "PATRIOT" COMMENTED NEGATIVELY ON CALLAGHAN'S REMARKS. IN ITS NEWS REPORT WAS INSERTED A PARENTHITICAL PARAGRAPH WHICH STATED THAT INDIA SO FAR HAS RESISTED ANY MOVE TO ENLARGE THE SCOPE OF WHAT IT CONSIDERS "ENTIRELY AN INDO-BANGLADESH PROBLEM" AND THAT THE INSPIRATION FOR CALLA-GHAN' REMARKS APPARENTLY WAS PRESIDENT ZIA "WHO HAS LONG BEEN TRYING TO INCLUDE NEPAL IN ISSUES WHICH INDIA CONSIDERS PURELY BILATERAL." IN AN EDITORIAL, HOWEVER, "THE HINDU" WELCOMED CALLAGHAN'S OFFER AND THAT EARLIER MADE BY PRESIDENT CARTER, WITH THE COMMENT THAT RIVER DEVELOPEMENT MAY SET THE PACE FOR GREATER CONCORD BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH.

3. MANNING SAID THAT CALLAGHAN IS QUITE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPING THE EASTERN WATERS. THE HIGH COMMISSION IS PROVIDING US WITH TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFER-ENCE, WHICH WE WILL POUCH TO ADDRESSEES.
GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, WATER DIVERSION, WATER RIGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE00524
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780015-0740
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Line Count: 83
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EUR
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 DACCA 102
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3801346
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CALLAGHAN COMMENTS ON EASTERN WATERS
TAGS: PORG, PFOR, PBOR, BG, UK, IN, NP, (CALLAGHNA, JAMES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d5abeae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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